



CANADA  
4-H Ontario

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## 4-H ONTARIO PROJECT



Press Reporter

EXECUTIVE HANDBOOK

## The 4-H Pledge

I pledge my Head to clearer thinking,  
my Heart to greater loyalty,  
my Hands to larger service,  
my Health to better living,  
for my club, my community, my country and my world.

## The 4-H Motto

Learn To Do By Doing

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## Handbook Resource Information:

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Date: March, 2014

### ***A special thank you to the following senior 4-H members who reviewed the handbooks and provided feedback:***

Kate Higgins, Huron 4-H Association

Victoria Kyle, Brant 4-H Association

Jennifer Pollock, Wellington 4-H Association

Brooke Thompson, York 4-H Association

4-H Ontario grants permission to 4-H volunteers to photocopy this 4-H handbook for use in their local 4-H program.

All information presented in this handbook was accurate at the time of printing.



**CANADA**  
4-H Ontario

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# 4-H CLUB PRESS REPORTER

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## Welcome!

Congratulations on your new role as your 4-H club's press reporter! Your fellow club members have elected you to be the press reporter of the club. As the Press Reporter within your club, you join a group of 4-H officers (President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary) and become a representative of your club. This guide will help you to understand what your role is as the press reporter and how to carry out your many official duties.

## An Officer's Role in the Club

Serving as a club officer means you are part of a team. The team's responsibility is to hold a club meeting that is fun but is also well run to inform others what your club does within your community. Make sure you come to the meeting prepared and ready to go!

## Your Role as the Press Reporter

Winning the nomination to be your club's press reporter is an honour and a responsibility. As the press reporter, you are being given the opportunity to raise awareness about the 4-H program in your area. You will be able to highlight what your club is learning, the fun you and your fellow club members are having and how your club is contributing to the community. As the press reporter, your responsibilities include:

- Preparing a news article, which may or may not include a photograph, after each meeting, event or activity and submitting it to the news media in a timely manner
- Becoming familiar with the "how to's" of news writing. You do not have to be an expert, but some helpful hints are included below
- Maintaining this Record Book with all of your written articles and related clippings from the newspaper
- Keeping a list of all leaders and officers of the club as well as a list of the club members in this Record Book
- Turning in your completed Press Reporter's Record Book at the end of the club

***Learning how to be an effective Press Reporter for your 4-H club is an important skill to learn both now and for future organizations you might be a part of such as Minor Sports Associations, Junior Farmers, Agricultural Societies and community organizations such as Rotary, Kinsmen, Lions, etc.***

## What Makes A Good News Article?

To be news, a 4-H event must be one or more of the following:

1. Recent
2. Important
3. Close to the place of publication
4. Unusual
5. Interesting

## Places to Submit Your News Report

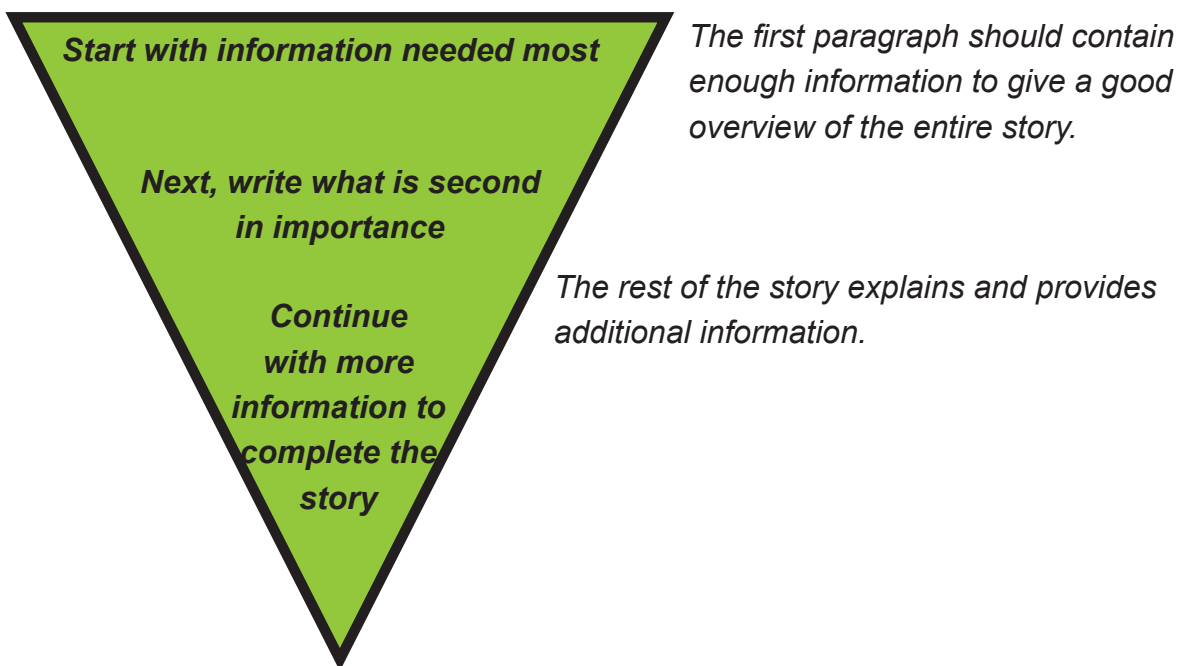
- Local newspapers
- Radio (target the Agriculture Department if the radio station has one)
- Local television station
- 4-H Ontario website
- 4-H Association newsletter and/or website
- Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)

Note: always have club leaders review your news report before it is submitted to any social media site.

## Guidelines for Press Reporters

- News stories must be timely.
- Editors prefer local or personal news. Check with your local newspaper, radio and television broadcast stations for any other special hints or requirements.
- Structure your story using the 5 W's and the H:
  - Who – who said it? Who is it about? Use full names.
  - What – what happened? Importance counts.
  - Where – where did it happen or when is it going to happen?
  - When – when did it happen or when is it going to happen?
  - Why – why is it important?
  - How – how did it happen? Was it unusual?
- Get to the point fast! Many people whiz through newspapers and will read the headlines and maybe only the first paragraph or two. Put the important facts in the first paragraph. And, depending on space, some editors may shorten your article to make it fit. If you have something essential to the story, make sure it does not appear in the last paragraph. Use the Upside-down Pyramid format.

The Upside-down Pyramid format puts the facts in “news order” so that the story starts with the most critical information that the reader needs and works down from there.



Your story might be cut due to space limitations, so ask yourself if the story is satisfactory if the editor decides to include only the first two paragraphs. If not, rearrange it so that it does!

- Make your story readable. Use the tips below to improve your story’s readability.
- After the last club meeting, give your completed Record Book containing the articles you have written and any newspaper articles printed to your leaders.

## Suggestions for Writing a 4-H News Report

- Be Neat** Your report should be typed using a font that is easy to read.
- Be Accurate** Spell names correctly and be sure to have the correct names of each person involved. Make sure dates are correct as well.
- Be Punctual** What is news today is history tomorrow. Get your report submitted to the media as soon after the meeting, activity or event as possible.
- Be Brief** Most reports do not need to be more than 80 to 100 words in length. Leave out unnecessary details and use short sentences averaging 15 to 20 words per sentence for easy reading. Sentences longer than 30 words may be hard to understand. Remember to keep paragraphs short as well and varied in length from one to five sentences on average.
- Be Complete** Remember the questions who, what, where, when, why and how. Make your story interesting and be sure to get to the point fast.

Include any plans your club has for future meetings, activities or events.

**Be Clear**  
will do.

Use simple language. Do not use a long word when a short word  
Avoid using slang and abbreviations.

**Be Objective**

Leave out personal opinions when writing a report. Report only the  
facts and remain completely impartial.

***Remember the reporter's A-B-C's:  
Be Accurate! Be Brief! Be Concise!***

## Using Photographs to Help Tell the Story

A photograph can draw readers to the story because a picture draws the eyes and then the reader wants to know the story behind the picture. Follow these rules of thumb when submitting pictures with your report:

- Everyone in the photograph should be clearly identified, front to back, left to right.
- Check with your club leaders to make sure everyone in the photograph has given media consent before submitting any news report.
- Check and re-check the spelling of names of each person in the photograph.
- Submit photographs to the newspaper in the required format (usually JPG files) along with your report. At the bottom of the report, indicate the name of the photograph file you are submitting.

## What is Media Consent?

Every volunteer and member that participates in any 4-H Ontario activity must fill out a Participant Agreement Form before partaking in any 4-H activity. On this form, there is a spot where participants can agree or disagree to having their name and picture shared with the media. Before any volunteer or members' name or picture can be used in a report, the member must have given media consent.

For various reasons, some volunteers and members may choose not to have their name and picture used. We have to make sure we respect their wishes and not use their name or picture against their wishes.

## Using Social Media to Submit and Circulate 4-H News

If you choose to publish your news reports through social media there are a few tips to keep in mind:

- Always have a club leader review the news report before it is published on any website. Once the report is posted to a website it will always be a part of the cyber-world, even if you delete the report after you have posted it.
- Do not post a report using your personal profile. Submit the report to your 4-H association to have them post it on your behalf or have your club leaders create

a profile for your club or a separate page (depending on the type of social media being used).

- Do not tag anyone in your reports. This will create a direct link to their profile.
- Always have permission before posting any pictures. Your club leaders should see the picture(s) first and know what you are going to do with it BEFORE you do anything.

## **Volunteer Leaders and Officers Lists**

Keep a list of the names of all club volunteer leaders, club officers and club members, ensuring that you have everyone's name spelled correctly.

Having all of this information together in one place will help you to be able to quickly look up any names you need for preparing your report.

## **Other Responsibilities**

Even though you hold the office of press reporter, you may introduce motions, discuss them and vote on all business.

## **References**

4-H Ontario Club News Reporter Record Book

4-H Ontario Youth Director Manual

4-H Club Officer Handbook, Oregon State University Extension Service

Florida 4-H Officer's Handbook, University of Florida IFAS Extension

Ohio 4-H News Reporter's Handbook, Ohio State University Extension

The Club Officer Handbook, AgriLife Extension, Texas A&M System

## Evaluating Your Leadership

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Club: \_\_\_\_\_

At the completion of this project, rank yourself on each of the following to determine which skills you improved upon and which skills you need to keep working on.

	Great	OK	Not so good
1. I recorded who was at each event and any highlights of the event.			
2. I maintained a list of names of club leaders, officers and members.			
3. I completed a report after each event and submitted it in a timely fashion.			
4. I used the 5 W's and the H while writing my report.			
5. I re-read my reports several times before submitting to make sure they were accurate.			
6. I kept my reports brief and to the point.			
7. I did not use slang or abbreviations in my reports.			
8. I did not put any of my own opinions in the reports I wrote. I just wrote about the facts.			
9. I checked with my club leaders before posting any reports to a website or social media.			
10. I brought a camera to each event.			
11. I checked with my club leaders to make sure they had media consent from the volunteers and members in my club.			
12. I cut out any of the reports that I wrote that appeared in the newspaper and put them in my press reporter's record book.			
13. I turned in my press reporter's book to my leaders at the end of the club.			
14. I improved my listening skills to be able to write accurate reports.			

Rate as great, OK and not so good.

What can I do next time to improve?

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## Club Leaders

<i>Club Leaders' Name</i>	<i>Phone Number</i>	<i>E-mail Address</i>

## Club Officers

<i>Position</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Phone Number</i>	<i>E-mail Address</i>
President			
Vice President			
Secretary			
Treasurer			
Press Reporter			

*Note: extra lines have been added in case your club has any added club officer positions*



## Club Meeting Notes Form

Event Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Press Reporter: \_\_\_\_\_

Place: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Club Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Roll Call Question (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Number of Members Present: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Leaders Present: \_\_\_\_\_

Number and Names of Guests:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Highlights of the Event (remember the 5 W's and the H!):

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Most important highlight of the event from those listed above:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## SAMPLE NEWS REPORTS

### ***Example of a Good News Report***

Three members of the Somewhere 4-H Calf Club were named the best dairy cattle judges of the day this week at a meeting of the club.

Bill Ward, Henry Jones and Carol Winters topped the judging contest with their placing of a group of four cattle from the herd of John Price, Anytown, Ontario. The area farmer hosted the meeting on Tuesday evening.

Part of the training club members receive during the summer is instruction in identifying dairy cattle that show good body conformation. Each member was required to place the cows in order from the best down and give their reasons for doing so. Before the competition, guest speaker, Ian Knowitall gave an interesting talk on judging dairy cows, showing the members what to look for in a top-producing dairy animal.

Later in the meeting, club members were tested in their knowledge of dairy cattle nutrition when they tried a quiz on information they had learned at the last session.

The next meeting of the club is set for August 9th and is to be held at the home of club member George Edwards, Hometown, Ontario.

### ***Example of a Not-so-good Report***

The Somewhere 4-H Calf Club met at the farm of John Price on July 5th with all members present. The president opened the meeting with the call to order and the secretary's report was read. We heard a report from Ian Knowitall on the judging of dairy cattle and a class of cows was judged by the members.

Club members handed in their monthly project reports and also tried a quiz. The hose was thanked for opening his farm to us for the meeting and the winners of the judging competition were congratulated by Mr. Knowitall. The meeting was adjourned.

### ***Mistakes in the above report:***

- No names of club members appear in this report. Always use as many names of members, leaders and guests as possible to let people know who participated
- Always write a report in the third person. Use the words he, she and they not we, us, I, or ours.
- Always start a report with the single, most interesting part of the meeting. In this case it was announcing the names of the winners of the judging competition.
- Check to make sure all spelling is correct. In the above article in the second paragraph, it should read 'The host was thanked for opening his farm.....' not that the hose was thanked.

## Press Reporter Summary

Press Reporter's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Club Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Record your reports here.

Report Topic	Written by	Submitted to	Date Submitted	Date in Newspaper

Record any other news and publicity activities here (radio, TV, newsletter, social media)

Activity & Topic	Completed by	Submitted to	Date Submitted	Date Appeared

Other activities completed as the press reporter: \_\_\_\_\_

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